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ABSTRACT

An integral part of the global curriculum is comprised of equipping students to continue to learn. Because most people get their information of current events through the media, the capacity to evaluate the sources of data is vital for real understanding. This teaching unit seeks to address knowledge, skill, and attitudinal objectives through five lessons: "Which Powerful People Can the Students Identify?" "Surveying the Media Use in Our Community"; "Discovering How Different Media Present Information"; "What Is the Best Source of Media?" and "Determining What Makes a Good Reporter." (BZ)

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HOW DOES THE MEDIA INFLUENCE THE GLOBAL EDUCATION OF AMERICANS?

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HOW DOES THE MEDIA INFLUENCE THE GLOBAL EDUCATION OF AMERICANS?

A Teaching Unit Comparing the Media

Rationale

Knowledge, hopefully accurate knowledge undergirds a persons interests and opinions. In learning about global issues students must acquire knowledge and distinguish fact from opinion, conjecture, and error. Since current issues are often rapidly developing their knowledge base, a single textbook for global education is not available and perhaps not a possibility. The most current information is found in periodically appearing sources of information.

Real success in teaching current issues does not occur at the end of a unit or even a year of formal study. The student must be motivated to continue to learn throughout the years.

Equipping students with the skills to continue to learn is an integral part of a global curriculum. The student needs to be made aware of how to keep abreast of developments and how to locate and evaluate the knowledge that they encounter. In this short unit the student will examine a variety of media. After completion of the unit the students will be called upon to use the information that they have learned throughout the study of other topics.

The vast majority of people gain their knowledge of current issues through one or more forms of the media. In this study the students will examine reports presented in various forms of the media and learn how to locate the best data to help them to understand current issues. Through practice in gaining information and performing analysis of stories, the student will be encouraged to develop regular habits in using a variety of media in intellectually appropriate ways.

Knowledge Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify the best sources of data for their knowledge needs.
2. Students will give examples of how the nature of the media effects the information available at a give time.
3. Students will give examples of how current issues develop in the public media.
4. Students will identify ways in which bias can enter into individual modes of media presentation.
5. Students will analyze the roles of various types of radio and TV programs, newspapers, popular periodicals, and specialized periodicals in acquiring knowledge on current issues.

Skill Objectives

1. Gather data about current issues from various media sources.
2. Identify facts from opinions, assumptions, and conjecture.
3. Analyze the content of various media presentations on the same topic.
4. Survey the use of various types of media presentations used by students and community members.
5. Evaluate the depth of coverage appropriate for various types of media presentations based upon the users purpose and needs.

Attitudinal Objectives

1. The students will desire to continue learning about global issues after the course is completed.
2. Students will voice the belief that American citizens need to have continuous knowledge about important issues that effect Americans and other peoples of the world.
3. Students will become aware that the media and its employees greatly influence the potential knowledge of American citizens.
4. Students will evaluate the statements and stories of writers and news comentators for their knowledge and understanding of the issue.
5. Students will regularly, critically, listen to news broadcasts and read periodicals paying special attention to global issues.

Lesson 1

Which Powerful People Can the Students Identify?

Objective: Given a group of people who have the power to influence people and/or; make important decisions for the nation, the student will identify those people they know by giving the person's occupation or title.

Procedures: Give the students the list of names and have them individually give the person's occupation or the title of their position if government employees. Make a list from this group or add person's of similar positions.

The following are a suggested list of people with their titles and occupations.

TV reporters: Connie Chung, Brian Gumbal, John Chancellor, Dan Rather, Jane Pauley, Walter Cronkite, David Brinkley, Roger Mudd, Barbara Walters, Mike Wallace, Marvin Kalb, Petter Jennings, Charles Kuralt, Tom Brokaw, Harry Reasoner
Newspaper and magazine writers: Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein, Gloria Steinen, William F. Buckley

Political and organizational figures and their occupations:
 Warren Burger Chief Justice U.S. Supreme Court
 Earl Warren former Chief Justice
 Adlai Stevenson Democratic Candidate for President and former
 Ambassador to UN
 John Foster Dulles, Dean Rusk, Alexander Haig former U.S.
 Secretaries of State
 Andrew Young former Ambassador UN presently mayor Atlanta
 Albert Shanker President American Federation of Teachers
 Diane Feinstein Mayor San Francisco
 Mary Furtrell President National Education Association
 Thomas P. O'Neil Speaker of U.S. House of Representatives
 Edward Kennedy U.S. Senator from Mass.
 Jessie Jackson Civil Rights activist
 Elizabeth Dole Secretary of Transportation
 Terrel Bell former Secretary of Education
 Richard Lugar Chairman Senate Foreign Relations Committee
 John R. Block Secretary of Agriculture
 William French Smith U.S. Attorney General

Have the students correct their lists. Compute the percentage of correct answers for both groups the media personnel and the political and organizational group. Discuss which group of people the students seemed to recognize better-- the media group or the group of people who have political power or lead large organizations. Why might this be the case? Which group of persons do the students think they should know the better? Why?

What are some ways that the political figures have of making information known to American citizens? Which of the ways do the students consider to be the most productive? Why do they think their choices to be correct? What methods does the President use? Ask the students if they agree or disagree with the statement: "Information or knowledge gives power." Have the students explain their reasons for agreement or disagreement.

Conclude with a discussion based upon the comedian Will Rogers statement, "All I know is just what I read in the papers." Would most Americans make that statement today or would they need to say "All I know is what I heard on the TV?" Conclude by telling the students that they will be studying the quality and adequacy of the information presented by the media.

Lesson 2

Surveying the Media Use in Our Community

Objectives: Students will survey adults and fellow students to find out the sources of information used to learn about current issues.

Students will analyze the survey data to determine the importance of the role of TV news, radio news, TV special reports, radio specials reports, talk shows, newspaper, and magazines.

Procedures: Assign students to ask a specified number (5 or 6) of adults or high school students to answer the following questionnaire concerning their sources of information on a

prominent national or international news story such as the TWA hijacking or the proposed federal budget cuts.

Directions: Place a check mark on the line next to the answer that is appropriate for you in each of the categories.

Age

- ☐ 15-20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 31-45
- ☐ 46-60
- ☐ 61+

Highest level of school completed:

- ☐ elementary school
- ☐ high school graduate
- ☐ Jr. college or vocational college
- ☐ 4 year college graduate

Check each source of information you used to learn about (insert the name of the story)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ TV nightly news | ☐ radio news |
| ☐ TV morning news | ☐ radio special report |
| ☐ TV special report | ☐ radio talk show |
| ☐ TV talk show | ☐ magazine (specify) _____ |
| ☐ newspaper (specify) _____ | |
| ☐ Other (specify) _____ | |

To analyze the results each student should combine the individual results into one summary report and bring the individual responses and summary report to class. In class the summary reports can be combined by groups of students while other groups tabulate the individual responses divided by educational and age levels. Each group should report its findings to the class.

Have the groups place their tabulations in the appropriate parts of the following chart which is drawn on the board or overhead projector so that they results can be examined.

Age/ed.group	Media Sources							
	TVNN	TVMN	TVSP	TVTK	RNEW	RSPL	RTLK	NPAP MAZ
15-20								
21-30								
31-45								
46-60								
60+								
elem.								
high s.								
Jr/Voc								
college								

Have the class examine the chart and discuss the information it presents. Begin by asking what are important common results. Have students hypothesize reasons for the commonalities. Does increased age or education change the media use of the sample? What media source(s) was/were the most frequently used by your sample for this story?

The students might return to one of the individuals they surveyed and interview that person. Why does the the person use the particular media as a source of information? does the individual believe that he/she gets accurate information and adequate information from that source? Do the students agree with the answers that the interviewees give?

Lesson 3

Discovering How Different Media Present Information

Objective: Students will compare the presentations of the same story by different TV networks, different types of TV news formats, newspapers, and news magazines.

Procedures: Assign students to listen to the TV news presentations. Have some listen to the early evening presentations and some to the late night presentations. Allow students to pick their choice of network and time in advance to avoid conflicts with families. Examine the presentation of the first new story. The students should record the who, what, when, where, and why presented in the story. Students should bring the results to class and discuss the differences in the presentations for the same time slot. The information may be displayed in a chart similar to the one illustrated for the previous lesson. List the network and time of the vertical axis and the topic and facts presented on the horizontal axis. Discuss the following questions. Why might the presentations be similar or different? Is the story presented exactly the same way in the later newscast? Why might there be differences? Discuss the importance of deadlines and film to TV. Compare the presentation of the TV with the same story in the newspaper and in a news magazine. Which media source presents more factual information? Do any of the media sources comment on the story or carry related stories? If so, what indicates that the presentation is not exclusively a factual presentation of the incident? Should the story be big enough to have several days coverage, follow the development of the story. What new facts are brought out each day? What individuals or groups become interested enough in the story to comment on it?

Related Activities: Use a stop watch to find out how much time is allowed for specific types of stories or how much of the program is devoted to national, local, and international news. Measure the space devoted to a topic in print media. Students should write sentences describing the strengths and weaknesses of the coverage offered by TV, radio, newspaper, magazines, etc. Students might write warning labels similar to thsoe found on cigarettes but applicable for the different types of media.

Lesson 4
What is the Best Source of Media?

Objective: Given a description of a news story, students will indicate what media sources would be the best to consult.

Procedures: Use a class question and answer session to identify the best sources, criteria, and reporters.

Sample source problems:

What sources would you use to get a quick overview of something that happened yesterday?

What is the best source to use to find out something that has just happened?

What sources would you use to help write a report for class that requires the explanation of an event and the related events that may have caused the incident or contributed to the event and the potential of the consequences of the event?

What is the best source to find:

- a. What candidate won an election today?
- b. Which areas of the state voted for a particular candidate?
- c. The score of a big game?
- d. How the American public feels about an issue?
- e. Alternative policies for business or government to follow?
- f. A comparison of the cost of living index by months for this year as compared with last year.
- g. The direction of the stock market today.
- h. A natural disaster such as an earthquake, flood, or volcanic eruption.
- i. The food problems in Africa.

Lesson 5
Determining What Makes a Good Reporter

Objective: Students will make a list of criteria which describes a good media reporter and identify several reporters that they believe to be among the best in their profession.

Students can research the biographies of reporters to see how their personal backgrounds contribute to the skills of reporters.

Procedures: Students list characteristics and give their reasons why these are important for a reporter to possess. Students could watch the news or read articles and find examples of the desired characteristics of reporters or they can use their memories to give examples of how the reporters have previously presented stories. Students can compare coverage of the same story by different reporters. Compare the amount of factual information presented, opinions stated, types of descriptive words (biased or unbiased) used in the reports. Students name those reporters whom they believe do the best jobs of presenting information. Students

write letters to reporters and comment on how they feel about the way the reporter covers a story.

Students may be assigned reports to research the biographies of favorite reporters to help identify the qualifications of the reporters to perform their jobs. Students share their research with fellow classmates. Students should state the type of story on which the reporter is best qualified to inform the public.

Related activities- Invite a local reporter or news editor to come to class and discuss their role and answer student questions.

Students write to national reporters with specific comments or questions.